DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 401 497 CG 027 021

AUTHOR	Lord, Diane; And Others
TITLE	The Social and Labor Market Integration of At-Risk Youth. ERIC Digest.
INSTITUTION	Canadian Guidance and Counselling Foundation, Ottawa (Ontario).; ERIC Clearinghouse on Counseling and Student Services, Greensboro, NC.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
REPORT NO	EDO-CG-95-54
PUB DATE	95
CONTRACT	RR93002004
NOTE	4p.
PUB TYPE	Information Analyses - ERIC Clearinghouse Products (071)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adjustment (to Environment); Adolescents; *At Risk Persons; Foreign Countries; *Interpersonal Competence; Interpersonal Relationship; Intervention; Secondary Education; *Social Adjustment; Social Development; *Social Integration; Vocational Adjustment; Young Adults; *Youth Problems
IDENTIFIERS	Canada; ERIC Digests

ABSTRACT

Youth who experience difficulties in personal and social development, often struggle to integrate themselves into society and into the labor market. This digest outlines a model which fosters social and labor market integration for such youth. The model consists of three dimensions: (1) psychovocational; (2) sociopsychological; and (3) sociological. The program helps at-risk youth acquire knowledge attitudes and skills which lead to the development of positive, personal, and vocational identities. The program was used with youth ages 16-24, who were experiencing significant difficulties with social and labor market integration. It consists of 12 modules, taught over a 15-week period. Modules are divided into two sections: personal identity and vocational identity. Data were collected from two pilot tests of the model to address the level of participation during the activities, participant retention, and other measures. Overall, the results indicated that the program has merit with at-risk youth. The combined effects of what is learned both in the modules and the practical experiences in a work setting allowed participants to identify personal and vocational goals. The program had some limitations in that youth who experienced serious personal difficulties were not successful. (RJM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 401 497

The Social and Labor Market Integration of At-Risk Youth. ERIC Digest.

EDO-CG-95-54

by Diane Lord, Jean-Guy Ouellette & Real Allard

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

CG027021

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ERIC CLEARINGHOUSE ON Counseling And Student Services

ERIC DIGEST

1995 EDO-CG-95-54

The Social and Labor Market Integration of At-Risk Youth

Diane Lord, Jean-Guy Ouellette & Réal Allard

Overview

Social and labor market integration represents a considerable challenge for youth in general and an even greater challenge for at-risk youth. Indeed, youth who have experienced numerous difficulties in personal and social development encounter significant obstacles integrating themselves into society and into the labor market. Ouellette and Doucet (1991) observed that the personal, social, educational, and vocational characteristics of at-risk youth resembled traits in individuals exhibiting weak personal and vocational identities which could contribute to integration difficulties of at-risk youth. This led to the development of a model of the factors contributing to social and labor market integration and a program to develop personal and vocational identity.

The Model

Our model of social and labor market integration consists of three main dimensions:

1. Psychovocational dimension: This is the heart of the model and consists primarily of: personal identity - Erikson's (1980) first six stages (trust, autonomy, initiative, industry, identity, and intimacy); vocational identity - Havighurst's (1964) first four stages (identification with a worker, development of basic work habits, development of an identity as a worker, and becoming a productive person).

2. Sociopsychological dimension: It subsumes the psychovocational dimension and consists of family, peers, school, work, and media networks.

3. Sociological dimension: It subsumes the sociopsychological dimension and consists of economic, political, cultural, geographic, and demographic factors (Allard & Ouellette, in press).

The model was verified, via focus-group interviews, by professionals working with at-risk youth, by employers who employ these youth, and by individual interviews with a sample of at-risk youth (Allard & Ouellette, 1994).

The Program

Development and Description

The program helps at-risk youth acquire knowledge, attitudes, and skills which lead to the development of positive, personal, and vocational identities, and which foster a social and labor market integration perspective. The program, entitled *"Programme de développement de l'identité personnelle et professionnelle"* (Program for the Development of Personal Identity and Vocational Identity), consists of the following:

· The Info-Guide - a brief overview of the program.

· Volume I - *Identité personnelle* (Personal Identity) - an introduction and six modules pertaining to personal identity.

· Volume II - *Identité professionnelle* (Vocational Identity) - four modules on vocational identity and one aimed at post-program transition.

The 12 modules are divided into 59 sub-modules and 98 experiential learning activities. The program is offered over a period of 15 weeks, 3 of which offer work experiences in the community. Individual interviews and visits to institutions and industries complete the program. Three examples of activities drawn from the program are presented below:

1. I Affirm my Individuality before the Group (from Module 6: Identity). Participants identify five personal characteristics which differentiate them from others and which are not well-known by other group members. Participants then rank their characteristics according to the degree of difficulty in sharing them with the group. Participants then share their characteristics with the group. Group members may or may not participate on any given turn. Participants conclude the activity by sharing feelings and reactions concerning the inability to identify and express individuality.

2. My Self-image as a Future Worker (from Module 10: Identity as Worker). Participants are invited to see themselves as future workers during a counselor-guided visualization. Group members then depict their image of self-as-future-worker in a drawing or collage. Finally, they compare their current image of self-as-worker (which they prepared in a previous activity) to their image of self-as-future-worker.

3. A Look Towards the Horizon (from Module 12: Integration and Transition). In this activity, participants identify their feelings about what awaits them at the conclusion of the program by drawing facial expressions and

by writing words on a poster. This sharing of feelings allows participants to realize that people react differently to anticipated situations and circumstances.

Experimentation and Evaluation

The program was used with 16-19 year old at-risk youth and with 19-24 year olds who were experiencing significant difficulties with social and labor market integration. There were two pilot tests to obtain reactions to and evaluation of each of the experiential learning activities in the program. Following each field trial, investigators modified the program to address areas of concern. This led to a second version of the program, which was used in a controlled outcome study involving two no-treatment control groups and two experimental groups. The results and feedback from this last evaluation led to the programs final version.

Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected to address the level of participation during the activities, participant retention, general knowledge on the components experienced, personal identity, vocational identity, and general comments concerning the program's content and process. Overall, the results indicate that the program has merit for use with at-risk youth (Ouellette & Doucet, 1993, 1994). Participants who complete the program improve their personal and vocational identities. The combined effects of what is learned both in the modules and the practical experiences in a work setting allow participants to identify personal and vocational goals and, consequently, to prepare for some of the realities of life and work. Some participant comments upon completion of the program attest to its effectiveness:

- "The program made it possible for me to find a job. I became the first person in three generations in my family to get off welfare."

- "Sometimes, we feel like dropping everything ..... especially studies. But while following this program, I became aware of the fact that I have to complete high school. And that's what I'll do ... go all the way to get my diploma."

- "This program provided me with a lot of encouragement and really built up my self-confidence. I know now that I have a place in society if I forge ahead and realize my goals and my dreams."

Limitations

The program had some limitations. Youth experiencing serious personal difficulties, which require therapy, were not successful in the program. However, the program was never intended as a group therapy program. Also, for the program to succeed counselors had to possess certain knowledge, skills, and attitudes. To meet this requirement, a training course was prepared covering the following content: characteristics and environments of at-risk youth, difficulties encountered by these youth in their integration attempt; realities of the labor market; Erikson's conception of personal identity; Havighurst's conception of vocational identity; the content and structure of the program; participant selection criteria and modalities for program delivery; attitudes, beliefs, and skills essential for counselors working with at-risk youth; experiential pedagogy; crisis intervention skills, a review of group work; and individual and group counseling skills.

Conclusion

This project made it possible to better understand the complexity of social and labor market integration of at-risk youth in New Brunswick. The multitude of personal and external obstacles encountered by these youth led to a program which heightened personal and vocational identities and thus enhanced participants' chances for successful integration. An extensive evaluation of the program confirmed its merits and its pertinence for at-risk youth.

References

Allard, R., & Ouellette, J-G. (1994). Profil descriptif d'une clientèle de jeunes à risque. *Éducation et francophonie*, 22(1), 17-24.

Allard, R., & Ouellette, J.-G. (in press). *Vers un modèle macroscopique des facteurs déterminants de l'insertion socioprofessionnelle des jeunes*. Revue de carriérologie.

Erikson, E. (1980). *Identity and life cycle: A reissue*. New York: Norton.

Havighurst, R. J. (1964). Youth in exploration and man emergent. In H. Borow (Ed.), *Man in a world at work* (pp. 215-236). Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

Ouellette, J-G., & Doucet, L. H. (1991). Intégration des jeunes à risque au marché du travail par l'acquisition d'une identité personnelle et professionnelle positive. In M. Monette, S. Rapagna, & W. Talley (Eds.), *Actes du XIVe Congrès mondial de l'Association internationale d'orientation scolaire et professionnelle* (pp. 98-110). Montréal, QC: Servi-Litho.

Ouellette, J-G., & Doucet, L. H. (1993). Résultats sommaires de la préexpérimentation d'un programme de développement de l'identité personnelle et professionnelle auprès des jeunes à risque. In M. V. Norman (Ed.), *Les Actes du Conat - 19e Colloque national touchant le développement professionnel* (pp. 166-179). Toronto, ON: University of Toronto, Career Centre.

Ouellette, J-G., & Doucet, L. H. (1994). Un programme d'intervention auprès de jeunes à risque: résultats d'une préexpérimentation. *Éducation et francophonie*, 22(1), 25-31.

Diane Lord is a research associate, Jean-Guy Ouellette is an associate dean, and Réal Allard is director of the Centre de recherche et de développement en éducation at the Faculté des sciences de l'éducation, Université de Moncton, Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada.

ERIC Digests are in the public domain and may be freely reproduced and disseminated. This publication was funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, Contract No. RR93002004. Opinions expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the positions of the U.S. Department of Education, OERI, or ERIC/CASS.

For information on other ERIC/CASS products and services, please call toll-free (800) 414-9769 or (910) 334-4114 or fax (910) 334-4116 or write ERIC/CASS, School of Education, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Greensboro, NC 27412.